

1 Interview Summaries

1.1 Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

Interview Type	Council of Government
Interview Location	Auburn, Maine
Interview Date	October 19, 2001
Summary Date	November 26, 2001
Interviewer	Thomas Burns agismap1@maine.rr.com
Interviewed	Fergus P. Lea, P.E, Planning Division Director: Barbara Fortier, GIS Coordinator/Environmental Planner Jeremy Evans, MPO, Transportation Director Staff Size 25
Budget (approx)	1.2 Million
URL:	http://www.avcog.org/

1.1.1 Agency Overview

The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG) was formed as the Androscoggin Valley Regional Planning Commission in 1962. It combines the traditional COG functions of joint purchasing, planning for individual communities and regional planning with economic development.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

AVCOG's GIS efforts have focused on Comprehensive Planning map illustrations, some parcel composite projects and a municipal base mapping effort using available Maine OGIS data.

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

GIS activity at AVCOG has hit a plateau. Management is generally supportive, especially the Planning Director and where needs are complimentary with Lewiston-Auburn Comprehensive Transportation System's (LACTS) needs on transportation issues. They have dedicated staff, although one key individual left just before the day before the site visit. The GIS program need is not currently facing intense GIS demand from member communities and further education and outreach might help generate renewed interest. There is good potential at AVCOG. Key ingredients for success are in place, including: a computing infrastructure, enlightened management, a experienced operators, and funding to a degree.

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

GIS grew out of hardcopy mapping and a graphics department. Their offices have a dedicated 'studio' space in the center of a ring of offices. This layout helps give personnel an opportunity to glimpse GIS work-in-progress, a neutral zone of sorts for shared education. In this work arena are to be found several workstations, a digitizer, E-sized plotter, layout tables, light tables, flat files etc.

Their computing infrastructure consists of:

- Dell Power Edge 2400 667 Mhz Processor 512 mb RAM
- Dell Precision 420 773 Mhz 250 mb RAM
- Gateway GP6-350 350 MHz 128 mb RAM
- Calcomp Drawing Board 3 Digitizer
- HP DesignJet 750c E-Size Plotter

AVCOG is primarily an ESRI shop. They have 2 copies of ArcGIS and 3 copies of ArcView 3.2a. The GIS Coordinator has used ArcView 3.X primarily and AutoCAD to digitize data. However, they have AutoCAD14 and Microstation.

There is no Professional 'Workstation' ArcInfo skill at AVCOG. The GIS Coordinator's background is in AutoCAD. However, the GIS Coordinator is making an effort to learn the new ArcGIS 8.1 redesign of ArcInfo. The GIS Coordinator has taken ESRI online courses and a weeklong course offered in Augusta by OGIS.

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

Existing data sets include:

Transportation	Area Covered	Linked Databases
Traffic Accidents	Andro, Franklin, Oxford Cty	TIDE
Transportation Projects (location)	Andro, Franklin, Oxford Cty	BTIP
Bike and Pedestrian Projects (loc.)	LACTS	Bike/Ped Plan
Sidewalk Network	LACTS	LACTS sidewalks
Turning Movement Counts	LACTS	LACTS TMC
Traffic Signal Inventory	LACTS	LACTS Signal Inventory
ATR Counts	LACTS	LACTS ATR Counts
Percent of Heavy Vehicles	LACTS	ATR Classification
Traffic Flow	Andro, Franklin, Oxford Cty	
Analysis or Derived Layers		
Shoreland Zoning	Andro, Franklin, Oxford Cty	Zoning Codes
Future Land Use	Town by town (comp. Plan)	
Landuse	Town by town	
Scenic Resources	Town by town	
Parcel Composites		
Mexico		
Bethel		
Rumford		
Turner		associated assessor data
Poland		
Greene		
Carabassett Valley		associated assessor data
Lewiston		associated assessor data
Auburn		associated assessor data
Norway		

Wilton		
Carthage		
Otisfield		
Newry		

Basemap features:

Complete OGIS data layers have been acquired by AVCOG including US Fish & Wildlife National Wetlands Inventory and NRCS Soils Information.

Currently unavailable but desired data sets include:

Maine Department of Environmental Protection Data:

- Threats to groundwater
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Air Quality Monitoring Data

Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Data:

- Rare and Endangered Species
- High value habitat data

The one exception noted during the interviews as obtaining datasets from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

1.1.2.3.2 Attribute Data

AVCOG has difficulty with complex sets of attributes and have not made much use of attribute information in the past with the exception of some census data and some road information from MeDOT namely the TINIS road database which includes such information as traffic counts etc.

1.1.2.3.3 Data Issues

AVCOG seems more or less able to obtain or create the data sets they need for their contractual obligations.

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

AVCOG currently has developed no applications. They have discussed hosting town data and providing a front-end application via the web using ArcIMS to view and display basemap data layers but no concrete action has yet developed.

Planned future GIS activity and applications:

Although no municipality has ArcView with the exception of Lewiston and Auburn, the Oxford Hills Growth Council may provide an opportunity for some GIS-related activity. Currently, an intern is at AVCOG, digitizing the parcels for the three towns that belong to the Growth Council: Oxford, Norway, and Paris. There is one copy of ArcView in the offices of the Growth Council but no one knows how to use it. They will continue to use GIS for Comprehensive Planning.

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

The position of GIS Coordinator/Transportation will not be filled by a person with GIS experience. Instead, they will hire a planner familiar with GIS. The bulk of the GIS responsibility then, will rest with the GIS Coordinator/Environmental who reports to the Planning Division Director.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

The GIS Coordinator indicated the major benefit to her was the inherent speed of digital technology over manual mapmaking methods. She can simply do her job faster.

In the opinion of their member towns, they have never been able to justify the costs of GIS.